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ABSTRACT

This study explored the roles that two parents played in their daughter's English education during the initial period after moving to the United States. For English language learners (ELLS) with limited first language schooling in the home country, it usually takes several years to demonstrate cognitive academic language proficiency. For ELL students to achieve educationally, they need to reduce that time barrier. Parents' active involvement is essential to ELL children's success. In this study, the two researchers were the parents of the child being studied. Through their personal observations, information from their daughter's classroom assignments, their own and their daughter's journals, and cassette tapes of their daughter's conversations with native speakers in different settings, the researchers, as participant observers, approached the topic of parents' involvement in three areas: English listening and speaking development, English reading development, and English writing development. Over 14 months, the researchers applied what they had learned in the TESOL classroom to their daughter's English skills development at home. Results suggest that parental involvement might be critical to ELL students' English education. (Contains 70 references.) (SM)

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Language Minority Parents' Involvement in Their Child's English Education: A Case Study of A Young ELL Student

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore the roles that two parents played in their daughter's English education at the initial stage after they moved to the States. For English Language Learners (ELL) with limited first language schooling in the home country, it usually takes several years to demonstrate their Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). If the ELL students are going to achieve in their education, they have to find a solution to overcome that difficulty within a short period of time. During this period, parents' active involvement is essential to their ELL children's success of Education. The two parents are the two researchers of the present study. Through their personal observations and with the help of their daughter's classroom assignments, journals from themselves and their daughter's, and the cassette tapes of their daughter's conversations with native speakers at different settings, the researchers, as participant observers, were approaching the topic of the parents' involvement in the following three areas 1) English Listening and Speaking Development; 2) English Reading Development; 3) English Writing Development. Over a period of 14 months, the researchers applied what they had learned in the TESOL classrooms to their daughter's four English skills development at home. The results suggested that parental involvement might be critical to ELL students' English education.

Introduction

Parental involvement is crucial to children's academic performance and parental involvement has a positive influence over child's academic achievement (August & Hakuta, 1997; Bryant, et al, 2000; Comer, 1988; de Jong, 1986; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Goodz, 1994; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Iverson et al, 1981; Klimes-Dougan et al, 1992; Reynolds, 1991; Scott-Jones, 1984; Shaver & Walls, 1998; Zellman & Waterman, 1998, etc.).

The purpose of the study was to explore the roles that two parents played in their daughter's English education at the initial stage after they moved to the States. The participant, Tina, was a young ELL daughter of the two researchers. From the first day of Tina's schooling in the States, the researchers thought how they could be involved into their child's English education and what roles that parents could play in it. The researchers kept a journal about what Tina did each day and how the researchers responded to them. The researchers would focus on three different areas: parents' role in their daughter's 1) English Listening and Speaking Development; 2) English Reading

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Development; 3) English Writing Development.

Ideally, the researchers were only helpers and supporters of what teachers and schools were doing. Lightfoot (1978) condemned some types of parental involvement like joining PTA, providing merchandise for the bake sale, and showing up at the back-to-school night (cited in Zellman & Waterman,1998). Parental involvement here only means parents help their children with their homework, design their study activities outside of classroom and are helpers and supporters of what teachers are doing in class. The research question for the present study was what parents could do to promote their child's English education. In this article, the participant researchers will present in the following orders: review of related literature, methods, results and discussion, and conclusion.

Review of Related Research

This literature review consists of the following four key topics, which reflect the variables in the research questions (the variables examined in the case study will be explained later): (a) parental involvement, (b) literacy skills transfer, (c) interrelationship between the L1 and the L2 reading, and (d) phonological awareness and invented spelling. The researchers present each of these topics as follows:

(a) Parental Involvement

Many studies supported that parental involvement is crucial to children's academic performance and parental involvement has a positive influence over child's academic achievement (Bryant, et al., 2000; Comer, 1988; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Huss-Keeler, 1997; Iverson et al., 1981; Klimes-Dougan et al., 1992; Reynolds, 1991; Scott-Jones, 1984; Shaver & Walls, 1998; Zellman & Waterman, 1998). Parental involvement in these studies has typically focused on encouraging attending school activities, assisting with homework, or frequent contact between families and schools.

For example, Shaver and Walls (1998) investigated the effects of parent-school involvement on the reading and/or mathematics achievement of second through eighth grade Title I students. Using ANOVA, the author analyzed data drawn from a sample of 335 students (about 94% white). The results suggest that parental involvement (regardless of the child's gender or socioeconomic background) is indeed a dynamic force influencing students' academic success. This study supports a direct relationship between parent behaviors at home (regardless of the socioeconomic status of the family) and child academic achievement (Baumrind, 1991; Walberg, 1984; Wentzel, 1994; Williams, 1994)

Klimes-Dougan et al. (1992) conducted an interview of 83 parents (67 mothers, 9 fathers, 4 grandmothers, and 3 guardians) by phone or by mail. Based on teacher data, family surname, and birthplace, 35 were identified as Latino. The ethnic backgrounds for the rest other students were not available. The findings supported the positive relationship between parental involvement and school success. Although most of the low-income families reported low to moderate participation, a positive relationship was found between parental involvement and school adjustment as early as kindergarten.

The belief in the positive relationship between parental involvement and children's educational outcomes had prompted the efforts to increase such involvement. Zellman and Waterman (1998) conducted a study of 193 Los Angeles area 2nd- and 5th-grade

children and their mothers to confirm the relationship between parental involvement and child outcomes. The results indicated that parent school involvement contributes to positive child outcomes. In this study, Latino and white families each represented one third of the sample. African American families accounted for 17% of the sample. The reminders were other families (Asian, mixed ethnicity, etc).

Noting that parental involvement in their children's education is a crucial contributor to children's achievement, Bryant et al. (2000) investigated the interrelationships among family factors, parental involvement in children's learning activities within and outside of Head Start, and children's outcomes. Data were collected by means of fall and spring parent interviews, teacher ratings of children's social skills and problem behaviors. The findings indicated that in the fall, parents who were most involved with their children in activities at home and in the community were more likely to be mothers with higher levels of educations. 521 subjects were involved in the fall activities and 165 subjects were involved in the spring activities.

In sum, the studies mentioned here all supported the idea that parental involvement had a positive relation with children's educational success. Therefore, the researchers recommended increased parental involvement. However, it was noticeable that some studies did not give as much weight to parental homework assistance or tutoring as they did to attending PTA meetings. A methodological problem is that if a parent could not attend PTA meetings or parent-teacher individual conferences, then this parent was usually excluded from studies.

(b) Literacy Skills Transfer

There is a popular saying that "children only acquire language once". That is to say, what children acquired, for example, knowledge, concept and skills, in their native language can be transferred into the second language (L2). This was supported by many studies (for example, Collier & Thomas, 1992; Cummins, 1989; Escamilla, 1987; Geva & Wade-Woolley, 1998; Modiano, 1968; Nagy, Garcia, Durgunogiu, & Hancin-Bhatt, 1993; Rodriguez, 1988; Verhoeven & Aarts, 1998; Wagner, 1998, etc.). When ELL children just arrive at this country, they may not possess the skills to communicate orally or in written form with their peers. Research found that the best entry into the L2 literacy at this time is through the native language (Clay, 1993; Snow, Burns and Griffin, 1998). Gudschinsky (1977, cited in Roberts 1994) discussed programs that first language (L1) literacy promoted the L2 literacy in Peru, Mexico, and Vietnam. Cummins (1981) proposed the Common Underlying Proficiency Model, in which literacy skills, knowledge and concepts learned in any language can be accessed through any languages. Thus, ELL children can use what they acquired in the native language into acquisition of the L2. As students accumulated more vocabulary in the L2, their knowledge base in the L1 can be increasingly demonstrated (Collier, 1995).

On the contrary, if the students do not reach a certain level in their L1, they may experience cognitive difficulties (Collier, 1989, 1992, 1995). At the same time, if after the student switches to the L2 at school, the parents also use the L2 to talk with the child at home, on the surface, it seems the parents are helping the child, but actually because both the parents and the child are functioning on a level which is much below their age, the cognitive development is expected to be interrupted and thus the child may experience academic difficulties in the future.

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Pavlenko and Jarvis (2002) investigated bi-directional transfer in the L2 acquisition, where transfer is generally referred to as unidirectional influence of the L1 on the L2. They showed that transfer could be bi-directional, i.e. while the L1 influences the L2, the L2 also influences the L1. This empirically demonstrated what Dodson (1985) had reasoned that the new concept in the L2 that the student had been introduced to in primary language will not only form the idea in the L1 but also in the L2. For example, if students understand what a Da(4)Xiang(4) is in their native language, they are most likely to understand what an elephant is if they know Da(4)Xiang(4) is elephant.

In one word, those aspects like knowledge, concept and skills in children's L1 can be transferred into the L2. Students need not to study them again when they study their L2.

(c) Interrelationship Between L1 and L2 Reading

Language minority (LM) parents play a very crucial role in their children's L2 development. Li (1999) conducted a five-month case study on her own daughter who was 12 years old. Through her personal observation, she addressed the issue from two perspectives: (a) LM parents' attitudes toward the L1 and the L2 and (b) academic study confirming the Interdependent Hypothesis of the L1 and the L2 (Cummins, 1981, cited in Li, 1999). This was the only case study found in an extensive search regarding a child's L1 to the L2 transfer that involved a native Chinese speaker.

Children's attitudes toward the L1 in general largely depend on how parents look upon it. The maintenance of the L1 greatly depends on how often parents use it. The researcher used her L1 with her daughter for most of the time at home except for the time allotted for English speaking and writing practice. She found strong evidence from her daughter's academic achievement that a good mastery of the L1 and parental supportive attitude toward the L2 is facilitative to a child's L2 acquisition.

Some studies have supported the Independency Hypothesis (proposed by Cummins in 1981) that literacy skills and academic ability can be transferred from the L1 to the L2 after a certain level of competence has been reached in the L1. Li (1999), through her observation, noticed that LM parents' attitude toward the L1 and the L2 was compulsory to successful bilingual education at home. Furthermore, parent-child interaction might have a critical impact on children's academic studies. As it is commonly believed that 5-7 years are needed for the L2 learners to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), if the L2 learners are going to achieve in their education, they must find a solution to overcome that difficulty within a short period of time. Parent-child interaction in their L1 may be the best way to overcome the difficulty and achieve the goal of education.

> It is better to introduce new concepts—especially those which are crucial to the young child's intellectual development—in their primary language in order to develop the conceptual apparatus required to make the L2 context-reduced input comprehensible (Cummins, 1981). Once a concept has been consolidated and proper concept relationships have been formed at home, it can then be further consolidated in the second language at school. The consolidation in turn helps the child to form additional concept relationships, giving rise to further second language stimuli which can spill over once more into the home language (Dodson, 1985). (Li, 1999, p.4)

Li (1999) often read her daughter Amy's textbooks side by side with her daughter.

After a short time, Amy could apply what she learned in the L1 into the L2 reading. Li picked one mathematics example from her own 35,000-word journal and the three tapes of her daughter's conversation to illustrate the interdependency between two languages. One day Amy told her mother that she came across the word "reciprocal" in her math class and that the teacher told the students how to do reciprocal calculations. She understood the procedure immediately because she knew how to do it when she learned it in her Chinese book. Amy's knowledge in the L1 apparently transferred to mathematics in the L2 and her understanding in the L2 had also consolidated what she knew in her L1. This also confirmed the argument in Cummins' Interdependency Hypothesis that "experience with either language can promote development of the proficiency underlying both languages" (Cummins, 1981, cited in Li, 1999, p.4).

Li's (1999) study also reveals that great importance of students' motivation and attitudes on achievement in both the L1 and the L2. For the current article, they were equally important.

What students learned in their L1 may serve as a priori knowledge when they encounter the similar situation in the L2. As we know, relating what students are learning to their prior knowledge is one of the most frequently used strategies by successful learners (Oxford, 1990). Ulanoff and Pucci (1999) compared the gains in the L2 vocabulary through two different methodologies: concurrent translation and preview-review. Concurrent translation means translating the story from one language to the other while preview-review means previewing the important and difficult points and reviewing the story in order to reinforce the important points. Results showed that the students in the preview-review group scored higher than the concurrent group and the control group. The finding had critical implications that building background knowledge as a means of teaching the L2 vocabulary to English language learners.

The interdependent relationship was clearly demonstrated in the study. Primary language support that is, in the L1 that the students received in the study served as a scaffold to connect the L1 background knowledge and the L2 knowledge. Furthermore, the researchers made use of students' L1 to facilitate the reading comprehension of the concepts in the L2. In this way, the new concept could be understood much more easily and in return, the connections between the L1 and the L2 thus facilitated new learning (Ulanoff & Pucci, 1999). According to the study, background-knowledge-building in students' L1 was crucial to reading comprehension in the L2, especially for the L2 learners. This result supported the findings of Tierney and Cunningham (1984) cited by Ulanoff and Pucci (1999).

The two above-mentioned reading studies (Li, 1999, Ulanoff & Pucci, 1999) were all conducted in the US settings. Would the same findings be obtained outside of the U.S.? Watkins-Goffman and Cummings (1999) conducted an ethnographic study in the Dominican Republic in order to determine the context in which Dominican students attain the L1 for improving their English as an L2. According to the authors in the study, the L2 students had a lot to learn, for instance, grammar, lexicon, culture, writing style and the way of knowing and learning when they came to the US, less was know about the teaching of literacy in the native country. In order to fill the above-mentioned existing gap, the present study was taken. The focus of the study was on the prior knowledge that the students had acquired about literacy in their L1 that would be transferred to the L2 classroom.

The most important finding of the study was that much could be transferred from the L1 class to the L2 class, especially with respect to reading activities. For example, summarizing in the L1 (in this case, Spanish) was easily transferred into summarizing in English.

If we believe that the L1 reading can help improve the L2, then why not put more strength into the L1 instruction? Based on this assumption, De la Colina, et al. (2001) conducted a study using a single case, multiple baseline (across subjects) design to study an intensive reading intervention among 74 low-achieving, at-risk students in first and second grade Spanish/English bilingual classroom. The study involved three research-supported techniques (repeated reading, teacher modeling, and progress monitoring). The question that researchers were trying to answer was: "Over a 12 week period, will a Spanish translation of Read Naturally, implemented 45 minutes per day and three days per week, improve the reading skills of bilingual grade 1 and 2 students?" The most relevant findings were as follows. First, most students—regardless of treatment group or phase—improved measurably in both oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. Second, students' oral reading fluency improved more than their reading comprehension. The research concluded that, based on these findings, the Read Naturally strategy provided in Spanish was effective in improving the oral reading fluency, and to a lesser degree, reading comprehension, for at-risk, beginning bilingual readers who were highly engaged with the strategy.

The above-mentioned study was about low-achieving students. What about high-performing students? Guerrero and Sloan (2001) attempted to identify and explain possible reasons for the academic success of the L2 learners in the state of Texas. The study involved one non-border urban school and three border schools. The methods used in the study were qualitative, based on the following procedures: on-site visits, a semi-direct interview protocol (which is appropriate for the study), classroom observations, and document analysis. The findings drawn from the study were overwhelming. All four sites shared the following features: (a) explicit support of Spanish literacy and biliteracy; (b) high expectations; (c) shared understanding of the Spanish reading program; (d) alignment between the Spanish and English program; (e) explicit targeting of "skills" involved in reading beginning in kindergarten; (f) explicit practice in testing-taking.

Language learning strategy use has become extremely important to language learners at the present time (Oxford 1990). It can be even more important to English Language learners. A study conducted by Hardin (2001) examined how Spanish-dominant students utilized cognitive reading strategies to enhance comprehension of expository texts in Spanish and transfer strategies to English reading. The study had 50 fourth-grade Spanish-dominant students, grouped according to their Spanish reading ability into three groups as Able (Ab), Average (Av) and Less-Able (LAb) in order to determine how their L1 reading ability would affect their L2 reading. The techniques used in data collection in the study were student interviews and a think-aloud task. The most notable finding about students' reading in English was that the Ab and Av groups had much higher levels of awareness of times when they were unable to comprehend (comprehension breaks) than the Lab groups, similar to when they read in Spanish.

Research suggests that cognitive reading strategies can greatly enhance reading comprehension for the L2 learners. Padron (1992) investigated how two instructional approaches enhance Hispanic bilingual students use of cognitive reading strategies. The

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study investigated to what extent two instructional approaches (Question-Answer Relationships and Reciprocal Teaching) enhance Hispanic bilingual students use of cognitive reading strategies. In this study, the strategies most often reported by bilingual students were called strong strategies and the least reported strategies were called weak strategies. Frequency of use of cognitive reading strategies reliably predicted students' reading comprehension, regardless of the instructional approach.

August, et al. (2001) examined whether performance on indicators of Spanish reading ability at the end of second grade predict English reading performance at the end of third grade. The results indicated that Spanish phonemic awareness, Spanish letter identification, Spanish word recognition, and fluency in letter and word identification in Spanish were reliable predictors of English performance on parallel tasks in English at the end of third grade. These results are consistent with the hypothesis that reading skills acquired in school contexts can be transferred across languages.

Genesee (1979) has reported the interrelation between the L1 and the L2 reading skills when the orthographies of the two languages (for example, Chinese and English) were different. He found that the correlations in reading skills between the L1 and the L2 were still significant, though they tended to be lower than reading correlations between similar orthographies, such as Spanish and English. Cummins (1991), synthesizing several studies involving Asian immigrant students to North America, suggested that attributes of individual students, especially their L1 literacy competence, contributed significantly to the acquisition of the L2, though the language and written systems were very different. These studies all showed that the reading performance in the L1 and the L2 were highly correlated (see a full review in Cummins, 1991).

From the research articles reviewed here, we have a very clear picture that the L1 and the L2 performance is highly related, at least in the area of the L2 learning. The above research covered different nationalities (Dominican, Chinese, Hispanic, etc.), different locations (the United States and Dominican Republic), different grades (grade1-6), different genders (male and female), different levels of achievements (high-performing students, at-risk students), and different research designs (qualitative research and quantitative research).

(d) Phonological Awareness and Invented Spelling

Read (1971, 1975, 1986) did some seminal studies in children's invented spelling in their native language, which was English. He suggested that preschool or kindergarten children who invented their own English spelling system were influenced little by the standard spelling system and that their invented spelling system showed an unconscious knowledge of aspects of the sound system of English, thus following a certain phonological patterns. Those patterns reflected children's recognition of sound-spelling correspondence. Taking vowel sounds as an example, children tended to (a) use letter names to represent vowel sounds (FEL as feel, LADE as lady, etc), (b) use single letters to represent digraphs or diphthongs (EGLE as EAGLE), and (c) use vowel letters to represent all 16 functionally distinct vowel phonemes (U as you). Read also provided evidence that children tacitly recognized certain phonetic contrasts and similarities, in that they represented these in their invented spelling. These findings had very important instructional implications, in that we could no longer assume that children knew nothing about spelling or sounds and waited to be taught adult spellings. Instead, they come to

school with knowledge of some phonological categories and relations.

After Read's 1971 study, many studies started to investigate children's orthographic knowledge (Chomsky, 1979; Forester, 1980; Henderson, 1980, 1985; Treiman, 1993). Henderson (1985) identified three ordering principles that students use. The first principle is the alphabetic principle – students acquire phonological awareness of the way the alphabet is used to represent sounds. The second principle is the graphic pattern principle, which requires students to know that letters can be organized into certain graphic patterns to represents syllables. The third principle is the meaning principle, which requires students to know the relationship between root words and their derivatives.

Read et al. (1986) showed that unilingual speakers of Chinese who were skilled readers of a logographic script would not be expected to develop alphabetic phonological awareness unless they were explicitly instructed in Hanyu Pinyin (romanized mandarin) or another alphabetic version of Chinese. According to Liow and Poon (1998), Hanyu Pinyin is a relatively shallow alphabetic orthography with a comparatively regular grapheme-phoneme correspondence (words are usually regular or predictable and this helps facilitate the development of alphabetic phonological awareness), as compared with English, which has a deep alphabetic script with many word exceptions that do not follow the simple grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules. Even though English does not always follow regular phonological expectations, a child skillful in Hanyun Pinyin, should be expected to possess a high level of alphabetic phonological awareness and to process written English phonologically (Frost et al., 1987).

Liow and Poon (1998) conducted one of the most important studies in Chinese invented spelling. They investigated the impact of phonological awareness in English and Mandarin for 57 Singaporean multilingual pupils whose language backgrounds were English, Chinese (Mandarin/dialect), or Bahasa Indonesia, using a homophone decision task, an English lexicality spelling test, and a Hanyu Pinyin spelling test. The results showed that the Bahasa Indonesia group exhibited the highest levels of alphabetic phonological awareness in English, followed by the native English speaking group, and then the Chinese group. The finding that was most relevant to the case study described later in this paper was that learning Hanyu Pinyin (a relatively shallow script) might be especially helpful before tackling English.

Shen and Bear (2000) investigated possible developmental trends in children's invented spelling in their native language elementary schools in China. This study consisted of two sub studies, A and B. Study A analyzed over 7,000 invented spellings collected from 1,200 students and study B analyzed almost 4,000 invented spelling collected from 300 students. The results indicated that children's spelling errors were not random; rather they reflected the development of children's orthographic knowledge. The finding is consistent with Read's work.

Cummins and Nakajima (1987) reported a study of 273 grades two to eight Japanese students in Toronto. English and Japanese standardized measures of reading were administered to the sample, together with assessments of writing skills in both languages. The relationships between Japanese alphabetic spelling (romanized Japanese) and English spelling were the strongest. This is consistent with the above studies on Chinese students.

Goswami and Bryant (1990) described three stages of phonological awareness: (a) syllabic awareness (that wig-wam has two syllables), (b) intrasyllabic awareness (that

each syllable has an onset and a rime, e.g. wig can be conceptualized as w-ig), and (c) phonemic awareness (that wig has three phonemes, /w/, /i/ and /g/).

Frith (1985) claimed that phonological awareness was the prerequisite for an early stage of reading and spelling development. She proposed a model for spelling and reading consisting of (in order) logographic stage, an alphabetic stage and an orthographic stage. In the logographic stage, the student reads and spells by pairing the visual representation of the word with its meaning. During the alphabetic stage, the student learns the relationship between graphemes and phonemes. In the orthographic stage, the student learns higher-order spelling patterns.

The studies mentioned in this section are all about children's phonological awareness and invented spelling. Some dealt with the relationship between children's English (L2) invented spellings and their L1 invented spelling. Some suggested that phonological awareness in children's L1 maybe transferable to their L2, and some suggested this with some conditions.

Methods

The participant was a young ELL daughter of the two researchers whose name was Tina. Tina was born in China in June 1994. Like most Chinese children, Tina was read to with Chinese Cartoon books or some stories even before she could talk. Though she had never attended any Chinese schools in China, Chinese is her native language as it is the language at home. When she reached three years old, she went to Thailand. By that time, Tina could speak very fluent and complete Chinese. In Thailand, she attended Kindergarten Level 1-3 and grades 1-2 in a private Chinese elementary school where she learned basic Thai and Chinese. At age of 5, Tina had learned Thai vowels and consonants and started to learn Pinyin (mandarin romanization). Within one semester, she had learned all initials and finals in Pinyin. She started to use Pinyin to leave messages and write shopping list. At age of 7, Tina could speak Thai fluently, read and write basic Thai in passages, but only a few in Chinese characters. Tina came to the United States in late December 2001 and attended the second semester of Grade two on January 8, 2002 when she was 7 and half. According to the Coordinator of International Student Guidance Office where every foreign student should go to receive an evaluation before they could be admitted to a school, Tina "speaks no English". So she was determined as ESOL Level one that is the lowest level possible.

When Tina just attended school in the States, the researchers believed that she might need some time to adjust to the new environment and in order not to influence Tina's English pronunciation, the researchers refrained from teaching her English word pronunciation except when segmentation of phonemes seemed necessary and helpful. The researchers predetermined what they could do the most was to motivate her in every possible way. According to Oxford & Ehrman (1993), high motivation spurs learners to interact with native speakers of the language he or she is studying, which in turn increases the amount of input that learners receive. Motivation also encourages greater effort on the part of language learners and typically results in greater success in terms of language skills. Genesee (1978) stated that motivation has also been shown to relate to increased competence in specific language skills such as listening, reading, and speaking.

Tina was highly motivated; thus, her interests in English speaking, reading and writing became very strong. The researchers once asked Tina why she was so eager to

study English when she just arrived here. She said that she was so anxious to communicate with other students. Everyday when she came back from school, she kept on asking questions about what she could remember but could not understand. When she had a question about the assignment or she could not understand the assignment, she would ask the researchers to call the teachers right away. The habit that she would not let questions stay overnight made her in a better position to catch up with her class. Her teachers in Thailand made exactly the same comments about her in this aspect that she would not let teachers go without making her clear. With parents' support and encouragement, plus her extremely high motivation, she made big progress in English education.

She kept on comparing the differences between her Thai school and American school. This was a good time for motivating her. The researchers explained every question according to what they knew and helped Tina build a positive attitude towards the language and culture that has produced Disney cartoons like Princess Snow White, Prince of Egypt, ...that Tina liked whole-heartedly.

During the whole year, Tina learned English with high motivation and her parents' helpful involvement. According to Fradd and McGee (1994), for a young English learner with little literacy in home language like Tina, basic oral language competence is likely to emerge earlier than the competence in reading and writing. Oral English would be a priority to be focused on before reading and writing. Thus, the article was arranged by the order of 1) English Listening and Speaking Development 2) English Reading Development and 3) English Writing Development.

1) English Listening and Speaking Development

At the very beginning, the class did not make much sense to Tina. Tina just felt everything was new and fresh. After two weeks, she started to feel frustrated and kept on asking when she would be capable of speaking in English. What the researchers could do was to encourage her to be confident and assured her that six months later she would be much more comfortable in communicating in English in her daily life. From the researchers' experiences in Thailand, Tina would have a "silent period" for about three months. During this time, she would speak little English but kept on asking questions like what this word meant and why that was that. So the researchers did not urge her to speak English or show any anxiety over her "silent period". It was very unnecessary to force young learners to speak at this stage. But after that period of time, she would naturally speak on her own (Terrell, 1981). From the fact that two researchers had taught English pronunciation and Oral English Practice for more than 6 years to university students in Thailand and the first author taught Grade 6 (first year of studying English) EFL classroom in China for one year, the researchers felt if they taught Tina how to pronounce English words, Tina would have an accent more or less like the researchers'. Another reason that refrained the researchers from teaching Tina English pronunciation of words was because Tina was just at the verge of being able to learn native-like pronunciation of English. The parents' policy would be critical at this stage. Johnson and Newport (1989) tested several groups of Chinese and Korean speakers who had studied English as a second language. They found that people who arrived as children aged between 3-8 did as well on the test as American native speakers. Those who arrived between the age of 8 and 15 did not perform as well as native speakers. Tina was 7 and half when she attended

school in the States. So the researchers determined not to teach Tina how to pronounce words, though, for most of the time, in order to develop phonemic awareness, the researchers did teach how to segment phonemes. The focus was on the segmentation of phonemes, but not on the pronunciation of words. When the researchers were asked how to pronounce some words, they always emphasized that their pronunciation was not for imitation but only for reference. Some phonemes like interdentals, [l] and [r] that Chinese students might have problems with did not bother Tina and the researchers never felt Tina got problems with them. One of the reasons here was that she learned all phonemes from native speakers, not from the researchers.

Tina's oral English development was clearly recorded every sometime. Following is the transcript of how Tina conversed with her native speaker classmate when she attended school for just one month and a half (recorded on Feb 23, 2002).

Tina: Today you…Today you what? Oou? Today you home! Ha? Today me…go home, watching TV, reading log, a ha, you reading log…finish? My reading log not finish. A ha. Hum. (laugh). How old are you? Ha? Eight? Seven. (laugh). Ha? My birthday, six, 18, no, no, February two, no, no February two, six, no, March, no, I don't know. You what? Today? February 10, March. You, March 10? February 10th. Where are you from? Ha? EL SALVDOR? (Laugh). Ha? Today I no finish little bit. Vow. What's you group, yellow group, green group, white group? Red group, blue group. Today me call Johanna, Johanna… no home. Her friends birthday. A Ha? What? You go into da:s? you walk? You go to football? You play boss ball? You don't ball. Today Hot? Hot. My home hot. No home? No house? cold. Johanna no apartment, Johanna, house. What? Two you stay go to party. Next Tuesday? Tuesday in the Party? Go to read? Ha? Next day, go to read, you book? What? Draw what? Draw the tree. You party or school party? School party. What? I dunt understand. Ha ha. You and me and Johanna go to school party? What? Oh, go to, You Joseph, Maria, go to reading, me, Johanna no go, Johanna go? What's day go? A ha. Sign a book? Me and Joseph, go and me and Johanna no go. Bye-bye, see you on Monday.

From this conversation on the phone, it was clear that Tina's speech was limited to simple phrases and some highly functional or formulaic expressions like watching TV, reading log, I don't understand, bye-bye, etc. To make herself understood, Tina tried hard to dig out every word she knew to express herself. Tina did not know how to say her birthday—June 18th. She said six, 18. She tried hard to express that meaning, but finally she gave up. When she did not understand something, she used Chinese way "ha?" to express she did not understand. She had no idea of verb "be" and no idea of auxiliary verbs. She did not understand most of what the other side was trying to say and the researchers guessed the other side did not understand what she was trying to say, either.

At that period, Tina did not understand much of TV. She only understood some words. She was trying hard to get some meaning from TV. What she could do was to see the pictures on the screen. The first author had been a professional English interpreter for 5 years. One of his jobs was to translate what cartoons said into Chinese for Tina. The first TV program Tina ever found meaningful was *Arthur* because Tina had seen this TV program in Chinese during her stay in Thailand through satellite dish. The episodes that Tina watched in Thailand were *Arthur's Pet Business*, *Arthur Makes the Team*, *Arthur's Vacation* and *Arthur's Lost Library Book*. Since she understood them in her native

language, she could guess what they were talking about in English when these familiar episodes were shown. Tina thought it was very interesting that she did not need her parents to help her figure out what these programs meant. She was very proud of herself. These TV series helped her build great confidence in herself. What Tina did, according to the researchers' journal, was she matched what she heard with what she used to remember in Chinese about these episodes.

With more understanding English, she switched among channels 26, 32 and 22, and she got more choices. When she felt some TV series were interesting, she would ask the researchers to borrow them from the public library for her if the library had them. The two researchers went to public libraries every week to borrow a lot of videotapes for Tina and Tina also found many TV programs interesting and educational. These video tapes included *Between the lions* (produced by WGBH Boston and Sirius Thinking, Ltd and is funded partially by a Ready to Learn grant from the US Department of Education through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting), *Arthur* (produced by WGBH Boston and CINAR, and is funded partially by a Read-To-Learn Television Cooperative Agreement from the US Department of Education), *Clifford* (Scholastic Entertainment), *Sesame Street* (Sesame Workshop), etc. Good TV programs for Tina were *Cyberchase* (The National Science Foundation, PBS and The Corporation for Public Broadcasting), *Caillou* (CINAR Corporation), *Dragon Tales* (Sesame workshop and Columbia Tri-Star Television Distribution), *Liberty Kids* (DIC Entertainment), *Sagwa* (Based on the book "The Chinese Siamese Cat" written by Amy Tan), etc. And the researchers usually pointed out who could be a good pronunciation model to imitate and who pretended to be a nonnative speaker as in *Dragon Tales* and *Sagwa*.

The English Tina learned in the school and videotapes and TV she watched at home had a strong impact on her. On April 8, 2002, the researchers had another recording when she was talking with her friend at the time she attended school for three months.

Tina: Today morning…wait a minute, no, no, are you finished your reading log? No? why? Why you not finishing now? Hum, hum. You reading video, no more time reading, yeah? I don't like that song. I don't like that song. No. Ell! Rock and Roll? (Tina asked the first author what it meant in Chinese and she got the answer.). I don't like it. Oh, but I don't like Rock and Roll. Because Rock and Roll too bad, a ha, I don't like it. You sister like it? Okay, whose CD? No, what your baby eat now? Your baby eat cereal. (laugh). Ha ha. Baby cereal. Cereal. What wice, what wice means? Her eat rice and cabbage? Don't eat baby cereal. Okay.

Tina's spoken English was, obviously, much better than the last time. She could produce full sentences and she did not use any Chinese way of asking the other side to repeat something. The researchers believed this was an important signal that she finally separated Chinese from English or she no longer used Chinese when she spoke English. Though she still made developmental errors, Tina did make a great progress since last recording.

For the first three months, Tina felt more comfortable to speak Chinese and sometimes, she would feel more convenient to apply some Thai Words to express herself, especially when she was working on her math problems. But after that, she used English more and more frequently than before. According to IPT (Idea Proficiency Test) That Tina took in May 2002 when she attended school for 4 months, she got level A for Oral

English (lowest level possible). Level A means she only could do half of the following:

1. Tell her name and age.
2. Identify family and familiar school personnel, classroom objects, basic body parts, common pets, and fruits.
3. Follow simple directions involving prepositions.
4. Use regular plurals.
5. Use present tense verb "to be"
6. Use the "-ing" form of a verb
7. Understand and identify moods in a simple story.

This was the most difficult time for Tina. She was still struggling in three languages: Chinese, Thai and English.

Attending school was challenging for Tina during that period. The researchers could see her frustration and struggling everyday. Every Monday morning she was reluctant to go to school because she knew a hard working week was waiting for her. What the researchers did most at that time was encouraging her by telling stories about how other people overcame difficulties when they wanted to accomplish some great work.

According to the researchers' journal, Tina started enjoying school after June. Here is a recording of Tina's assignment in classroom. When the researchers found it in her school bag on June 7, 2000, she was asked to read for recording.

Tina: I think the second grade is fun because we do math, reading and spelling. So we have fun. We also play, watch movies and eat. We can have a picnic. We can do addition, subtraction, number words, multiplication and division. That's all [the things] about master of math. Finally this is some of the things about second grade.

At the same day, the researchers also found one of Tina's math problems that was solved on April 10th, 2002. In order to check whether she was still using Thai language to solve math problem, she was invited to talk aloud what she was thinking when she was solving the math problem.

Tina: 491 – 64 = 427. First I look at the number, second, I see 1 can't subtract 4, so I borrow from the neighbor. And then I got 7, third, 8 subtract 6 equal[s] 2, 4 subtract 0 equal[s] 4. Last I got 427.

The researchers noticed clearly that Tina was using English during her talking aloud. She did not use any Thai here at all though L1 transfer was still visible "1 can't subtract 4.". It seemed she had switched from Thai into English in solving math problem. In addition, she still did not have any idea of subject and verb agreement, so she did not add a suffix –s for the word "equal".

On June 8, 2002 when Tina had attended school for five months, in order to check Tina's progress in English, the two researchers for the first time interviewed Tina in English.

Author: Today is June 8, 2002. Tina came to study in the States for exactly 5 months. So I want to interview Tina. Okay, Tina, how old are you?

Tina: Eight.

Author: Eight. Okay. Now you have studied in PB Elementary School for 5 months. Do you like to speak English now?

Tina: Yes.

Author: Comparing with Thai language, which one do you prefer to speak?

Tina: English.

Author: You feel more comfortable with English, right?

Tina: Yes.

Author: You know, *Sagwa*, a TV program has been on TV for a long time and you have watched that for a long time. How do you like the TV program?

Tina: Good. It's funny.

Author: It's funny. Can you tell me something about *Sagwa*?

Tina: *Sagwa*? About Sagwa.

Author: Yes, please.

Tina: Sagwa is a palace cat. And she has a family. Her sister is Xigwa. Her brother is Donggwa and her family has babameaw, mamameaw, Dongwa, Xigwa and Sagwa. And they call the Magistrate "the foolish Magistrate" because the Magistrate like noise, but Taitai Don't [doesn't]. One time the Magistrate got a cricket. His name is Monk. But Taitai don't like Monk. But "Foolish Magistrate" like Monk because Monk can make some noise.

Author: So it seems you don't like the Magistrate, but you like Taitai. Is that right?

Tina: No. Sometimes Taitai is kinds like mean.

Author: Really? What about the Magistrate?

Tina: The Magistrate like to eat and play.

Author: So he is very foolish.

Tina: Yes.

Author: Vow, that's cool.

Tina: And the cat can write, too.

Author: How well can they write?

Tina: Like they can write their name, a sentence, a rule.

Author: Really? Vow, Who taught them how to write?

Tina: I don't know. But her whole family know how to write.

Author: By paintbrush? Right?

Tina: No. Use their tails.

Author: Use their tails to write Chinese words. Vow, that's amazing. Okay, can you tell me something about *Dragon Tales*, another TV program recently?

Tina: Hum, *Dragon Tales* is about dragons and two kids. One is Max and Amy. Max is Amy's brother. And they have a kind of stone and they said: " I wish, I wish with all my heart to fly with dragon in a land apart" and then they go to dragon land. They like dragon land very much because they got a lot of friends, Zack, and Vizy, and Castle and Ord and Cissthy. So Zack and Vizy…it's two head but the same body. So it's two-head dragon

Author: I remember you mentioned about *Cyberchase*. Is this a story about *Cyberchase*? No, not the same story?

Tina: No. This is the story about *Dragon Tales*.

Author: Ooh, Only about *Dragon Tales*, not *Cyberchase*. *Cyberchase* is another TV program, right? Can you tell me something about *Cyberchase*?

Tina: *Cyberchase* is kinds like math, math cartoon. It's like…like show you how to do something, like…

Author: math, mathematical equation?

Tina: Hum.

Author: Do you like this kind of cartoon?

Tina: Yes, but sometimes it's very hard, sometimes it's easy.

Author: Vow, it's not easy to understand sometimes. Right? Okay. I can understand that. That's no problem. After I interview you for a long time, may I ask you a question? How do you think about English now?

Tina: I think it's good.

Author: Can you tell me something about summer school and school bus?

Tina: Summer school is a kind of fun. But I don't like school bus. At first, I like school bus, but now I don't because at first I didn't ride school bus before, so I think school bus is fun. But after two days, school bus is a kind of like boring.

Author: Your school bus doesn't like the Magic school bus, right?

Tina: Yes, the magic school bus is magic.

Author: But this one is not magic

Tina: Yes

Author: So you feel it's a kind of boring.

Tina: Yes.

Author: Can you tell us something about Magic school bus which you've seen a lot of series?

Tina: Yes. It's fun because magic school bus has eyes, the bus have eyes (laugh). When the teacher push the button, the school bus can be a spider, a pizza, or anything they want.

Author: If they make a wish?

Tina: No. They don't make a wish. They just push a button.

Author: Vow, this one only push the buttons. So they can become anything they want. Not like the *Cyberchase*, they need to make a wish. And *Dragon Tales?*

Tina: No. Dragon tales have to make a wish, so they can go to dragon land. Then they can come back. But *Cyberchase,* they don't need to make a wish, they use their mind.

Author: That's very different.

Tina: The buttons are very different. Sometimes they can be big; sometimes they can be small.

Author: They can change their size.

Tina: And I like the cartoon *Clifford.*

Author: Why is that?

Tina: Because *Clifford* is a big, very very big dog. When Clifford is a baby, he can't jump because he is so little, but now he is bigger than a house.

Author: Bigger than a house? Have you ever seen a dog like that?

Tina: No, It's just in the cartoon.

Author: Do you think learning English is a kind of fun?

Tina: I think so.

Author: So I think you will make another big jump in the next six months. Right?

Tina: I think so.

Author: Next time when we make phone calls to Thailand, you need to speak with them in English. Okay? Because you feel more comfortable to speak English than in Thai. Okay. I'm very happy that you've made such a big progress within such a short time. I hope I have another chance to interview you next time.

This was the first time that Tina was interviewed about cartoons. She had very

detailed descriptions of several cartoons here. Though Tina still had problems with Subject and Verb agreement, no -s for plural forms, which was in accordance with Stauble (1984), and she did not know how to answer negative sentences. An error analysis would show a clear influence from her Asian languages: Thai and Chinese. She used some formulaic expressions acquired during her conversation with native speakers, e.g. "...kind like...". However, She did make a big jump from last recording in terms of fluency and completeness of sentences. And all this was made within five months.

Because Tina just came to this country for five months, according to the rules in the county, Tina was required to attend Summer school beginning in June 2002. It was during this period in Summer school when Tina made a big progress in oral English. She started speaking fluently. The exact phenomenon happened when the researchers stayed in Thailand. The researchers believed that after 3-5 months of "silent period" and a certain accumulation of vocabulary, syntax, etc, during the period of Summer school which was mainly playing games, not serious studying, Tina started enjoying communicating in English with her friends. Tina's experience in Thailand made the researchers patient at the initial stage when the family just arrived here.

ESOL program was very important in Tina's literacy development. She had regular ESOL classes when she stayed at the first school, three times a week, and one hour for each time. After she moved to a new school in September 2002, since she was much better in that school, she received very limited ESOL training (less than two hours a month for which the researchers complained to the school), but it seemed mainstream classroom benefited her much more than the researchers had expected. Tina even complained the two hours' ESOL per month for being bored and learned nothing. So the researchers talked with the ESOL teachers in the new school. One of Tina's ESOL teachers told the researchers: "Tina felt bored here because she finished her assignment much faster than the rest students. I felt guilty to have her here." They also told the researchers that Tina would definitely exit the ESOL program if she could take the IPT (Idea Proficiency Test) at that time. The researchers then decided that Tina should take IPT immediately without delay. If she could exit ESOL program then, why waste her time there. She took the IPT for the second time in Nov 2002. Her score for oral part is D, which means: a student can:

1. Identify modes of transportation and household items.
2. Use common weather vocabulary.
3. Understand comparatives.
4. Name the days of the week.
5. Use prepositions correctly.
6. Ask simple present tense questions.
7. Use mass nouns correctly.
8. Express him or herself using the past, present, and future tenses.
9. Identify the main idea and descriptive or supporting details of a story or TV show.
10. Express opinions in complete sentences.
11. Comprehend and predict the outcome of a study using modal auxiliary such as "might, may, will"

Comparing the two IPT test scores (One in May 2002, four months of arrival, the other one in Nov. 2002), Tina has made great progress in her oral English.

2) English Reading Development

Tina's English reading started when she attended the school in the States. She did not have any reading in English before she came to the US except she knew vaguely the English alphabet. Reading is a complex process that takes place over a long period of time. Readers gradually use their developed English language knowledge, their world knowledge (including their knowledge about cultures) and their understanding of print to make sense of the written text. That's exactly what Tina was experienced. When Tina just arrived here, the researchers borrowed some picture books from library for her. The pictures in those books did not make any sense to her because pictures contained too much information about a new culture that she had few chances to experience in another country. What the researchers could do was to explain those pictures in Chinese to her for each book. During that period, their explanation basically included the written text for each picture. The focus was only on the meaning of pictures and cultures they revealed. The researchers believed that was important for world knowledge build-up.

Explaining picture books could prove to be tedious especially when the researchers had to explain 7-10 books each day and had a lot of other business that should be taken care of. In addition, Chinese language was only used for transition for Tina to get familiar with the new culture. The researchers needed to find a substitute for the role. Librarians recommended that the researchers should borrow some picture books on cassettes for a try. Those books were recorded on cassettes with some signals for turning pages and different sounds for different characters.

When the researchers got the first picture book on cassette in February 2002, they provided a brief introduction of the content and asked Tina to play the cassette. Since there was no signal for turning pages, Tina did not know when to turn the pages and she could not keep track of the words. Then the researchers went to borrow book on cassette with turning signals. Because it was the first time, she did not even understand "Please turn the page when you hear bell ring". After the researchers told her that, she could turn her pages by following that sound. She was so happy to understand that. When she heard the bell ring, she looked at the researchers with a smile. She started making some sense of the cassettes!

She was usually advised to listen to cassettes for as many times as possible. Whenever she had questions, she was encouraged to ask for clarification. After her questions were answered, she was asked to listen to the cassette again to see if she could tell the researchers what they meant.

In April 2002, the researchers stopped borrowing books on cassettes. First because Tina was not lo longer interested in them, second because Tina's interest changed to TV and Video tapes which were much more interesting than books on cassettes. But still she got enough books to read at her leisure time.

In May 2002, Tina scored 25 out of 51 for her reading in IPT. She could do half of the reading when she just studied English for 4 months. This result surprised the researchers very much comparing to her score in Oral (Level A, Lowest level). This might suggest a contradictory perspective on the view that speaking develops prior to reading (See more on Fradd & McGee 1994).

As more and more books were borrowed, the researchers offered Tina a challenge that she should figure out the meaning of a word, a phrase or sentence by finishing the book.

If she could not figure out, then read it again. Only when she still could not understand the meaning by reading for two times, could she ask the researchers' help. The researchers told her that a question could be helpful only when she thought and could not figure it out.

In July 2002, when the researchers showed her a list of 200 sight words, she could identify them immediately without hesitation.

In August 2002, Tina was assigned a new school according to the county's new relocation plan. At this school, each student was required to bring in a chapter book, not a picture book. Each student needed to read his/her own chapter book during "Dear Time" each day when the students finished class assignment. The researchers believed that was a new challenge to her and a great chance for her reading development. Whenever she finished a chapter book, the researchers would ask her to retell the story. She usually asked how long the researchers would like her to spend on retelling. For the first time, the researchers told her she could tell as long as she wanted. She then retold the story for more than 45 minutes in English! After the first time, because of the limited time, the researchers only asked her to retell a story within half an hour and recorded several stories when she was telling.

She decided to bring in something she knew from some other sources to the school. Since she had watched *Arthur* on TV, she kept on borrowing books of the series until no more new books of this series were available in the library.

Though *Arthur* series was familiar to her, reading a chapter book and watching TV could be different two things. The biggest problem she encountered was the enormous amount of new vocabulary. At this time, she had three choices. First was to ask the researchers, the second one was to look it up in the dictionary and the third one was to guess the meaning from context by herself. She was encouraged to use the last choice because the researchers believed she could gain the most by that. On March 1, 2003, Tina brought back a vocabulary preparation test of 140 items for her national examination the next week. She could identify correct answers with only less than 10 wrong answers.

Tina's school once distributed a form called Reading Log. It was for the teacher's assignment. When she finished reading a book, she was supposed to fill out the following items: title, author's name, character, setting, beginning, middle, and ending. The researchers thought that was a good way of reading. They required that Tina should write reading log even if the teacher did not ask for it. She needed to fill in one form for each book she read. This enabled Tina to keep track of the main ideas of the text. She kept on doing that for 3 months until the researchers found she could do that easily.

If the researchers had time, they would read books together with Tina. Tina loved this happy time. The researchers used two kinds of methods to read. First, parent and kid read together; second, parent and kid read paragraphs in turn. While reading, the researchers asked Tina to point at the lines with her finger.

Besides reading, Tina would like to play a game named "pop corn". If the person who was listening had questions, he/she just said, "pop corn", and then raised the question. The person who was reading should answer the question. In this way, Tina could understand books easily, and the researchers could check her understanding immediately. Another advantage of parent-child reading together was that the researchers could raise Tina's awareness of syntax. If Tina ignored "-s", "-ed", or "-ing", the parents would ask her to read the sentence again.

As I reviewed literatures in Literacy skills transfer and interrelationship between L1 and L2 reading, L1 and L2 reading and other skills could be transferable. After Tina's English became more and more fluent, the researchers decided to have a different try. In September 2002, the researchers decided to send Tina to a Chinese school on Sundays. The class started at 9 am and ended at noon and in complete Chinese (The teacher did not understand English). After coming back from school, the researchers would help her with her homework, and prepared her for spelling tests for the next week. As usual, with teacher's requirement, she needed to read those Chinese texts to me and showed me how to write Chinese characters she had just learned. For each spelling test, quizzes and exams, she usually got 100% correct. At the end of the semester (December 2002), she won all two awards from Chinese school. The results might support those studies I had reviewed in Literacy skills transfer and Interrelationship between L1 and L2.

With all the means mentioned above, reading in the school, reading at home alone or with parents, Tina's reading comprehension improved fast. And thus, speeded her reading. When taking IPT in Nov. 2002, Tina scored 41 out of 51, which put her into a competent reader category.

3) English Writing Development

At the two schools that Tina attended until now, there was usually a spelling list for each week. During the period from January to June 2002, the spelling list contained only 10 words. After September 2002, the spelling list became 16-20 words. Sometimes these words were about one theme, for example, the arithmetical operations including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division; or moneyary units like quarter, dime, nickel and penny. Sometimes they were new words from her textbook; and still other times they were words with the same sound at the last part, for example, right, might, delight, sight, fight and tight. At the first stage, after Tina received the spelling list, one of the researchers explained the meaning of the words to her, if it was possible, put words which had meaning connection together or put words that rime at the last part together and explained the pronunciation for some letter combinations. For example, for the above list, the researchers would explain that –ight should be pronounced as /ait/ and she would be able to put all phonemes in the word together and produce the correct pronunciation. If the words such as "multiplication" wer too long, the researchers would segment the word into individual phonemes, and then put them together. At the second stage (5 months later), the researchers did not tell Tina tips of spelling directly without her thinking first. Instead, the researchers helped her find out the patterns or similarities of the words in each spelling list, and then rearranged the order of the list. This method largely decreased the time necessary for Tina to memorize words and increased her volume of vocabulary. In the meantime, the researchers asked Tina to go over the old spelling list every two or three weeks. When reviewing, she not only needed to spell correctly, but also made two sentences by using each word. The time spent and the scores on spelling tests showed clearly how effective Tina built up her vocabulary. Since Tina received the list on Monday and tested on Friday, the researchers would use Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning to review these words. Ten minutes was spent for each morning for the first five months. After September 2002, only 5 minutes was needed for each morning. For the first five month in the first school, Tina usually scored 8 - 9 out of 10. After Tina moved to the second school in third grade, except two times she made an error each, she

always score 100%.

This step-by-step method was very efficient and effective. At the same time, Tina's excellent scores inspired her to accept parents' advice. She believed that parents' suggestions were necessary in her study. Her English vocabulary expanded fast.

In May 2002, Tina scored 5 out of 12 in writing. The researchers had exactly the same feeling as they noticed her score in reading: surprised. For the first 4 months, she achieved half of writing required as a competent writer. This again provided a new insight into the view that speaking develops prior to writing (See more in Fradd & McGee 1994).

After Tina had accumulated a certain amount of vocabulary and was able to express herself with some help, the researchers decided that Tina should start to keep a journal. The starting day was Oct. 21, 2002. It had been ten months since Tina started learning English. From here journal, the researchers noticed that her invented spelling was obvious when she was asked to write something in English. This could also be seen easily from her classroom work. This bothered the researchers for a long time until the researchers used Read (1971)'s words to test Tina to see if Tina's invented spelling followed some rules. (Words that Tina had learned were avoided. All words here were new to her).

Teable (Table)	Ladey (Lady)	Egole (eagle)
Fale (Fell)	elevater (elevator)	
Airfeld (airfield)	Fronter (Frontier)	igelu (igloo)
Sutecas (suitcase)	gote (goat)	poley (polio)
Das (does)	annymo (animal)	bananna (banana)
Pensol (pencil)	carete (carrot)	trane (train)
Chiken (chicken)	traghik (traffic)	jip (jeep)
Maryed (married)	plante (plant)	angrey (angry)
Foute (fought)	coute (caught)	Susey (Susie)
Presents (presents)		

Before the test, Tina was told she might write what she thought was right for the pronunciation provided. From the above examples, it seemed Tina used letter pronunciation for phoneme for most of words, for example, egole (eagle), trane (train), jip (jeep), chiken, pensol, etc. As Read (1971) stated in the conclusion that "What the children do not know is the set of lexical representations and the system of phonological rules that account for much of standard spelling; what they do know is a system of phonetic relationships that they have not been taught by their parents and teachers." (P30)

Not commenting on her writing or spelling, the researchers encouraged Tina to keep writing journal everyday. At the very beginning, the entry for each day was very short. For example,

10/27/02

Today I go (went) to Hope Chinese School. I studied Math and Chinese. I like them very much. My teacher is a very famous one. I had fun there.

Sometimes she would record what she learned in a science class:

10/29/02

Today I learn that if you put soap that had glycerin in the solution, it will make the bubble bigger because you know that glycerin can make your skin smooth, so it can be sticky and you know that if you blow the bubble gum for longer time, it can be bigger. If you blow bubble gum for short time, it will be smaller. So it is the same thing for bubbles.

Reflections from reading:
11/07/02

Today I started a new book called "Buster's Dino Dilemma". I am on chapter I. Buster really likes dinosaurs. His third grade class had come to Rainbow Rock State Park for a field trip. The Park was a great place to hunt for fossils of ancient animals – including dinosaurs. It was funny when Mr. Ratburn siad (said) Atfer (after) we exit the bus, please line up outside in an orderly fashion. The kids piled out quickly. The word orderly did not seem to be on any one's mind. I just get started with the book. I predict that this book will be very interesting. I like the book os (so) far.

Observation of American culture:
11/12/02

Today is Mix and Match Day. At school everybody is funny. They look weird. The shoes they are wearing is mix. The socks they are wearing is mix, too. I didn't do that because my mom didn't know that it is Mix and Match Day.

A very happy shopping experience:
11/30/02

Today I bought a lot of stuffs. I bought a coate (coat), three T-shirt, clothes for my Barbies and three Barbies. This week I also bought a book bag, a watch, a shoe-store for my Barbies and a swimming pool for my Barbies. I got a lot of stuffs because I am a good kid and a good student. So I have a lot of things. I am very happy. By the way I took a picture with Santa Claus. I got two things. First I got a candy. The second thing is a growth table. I think I will do better so that I can get more candy and gifts.

Record of awards:
12/03/02

Today at an assembly I got many award like Good Attendance, Homework Award, Citizenship Award and Honor Roll. I got a lot, right? I am very proud of me (myself). My parents are proud of me, too. They said I did a great job this quarter.

12/1/02

Today I went to my Chinese School. We had our Fall Ceremony. I won the certificate of Distinguished Student and 2 pencils. One is a Christmas tree, the other is Santa Claus. I also got a notebook and a folder. I like them very much. My parents said I can buy the other kind of folders and notebooks next time. Last time I got 99%. This time I got 99% again. But any way I am still happy.

Recording of a tour
12/28

Today I went to D.C. I went to Botanic Garden, Art Museum and Natural History Museum. I saw a lot of interesting thing: how the earth began, how lives came, how animal evolved. We didn't get to finish the Natural History Museum. We will finish it next time. I also saw a little town surrounded by three toy trains. The toy trains and the town are at the Botanic Garden. D.C. was fun.

Training an eight-year-old kid to write was laborious for both the parents and the child. First, it was not teacher's assignment. Second, the child had limited vocabulary. Third, both the parents and the child were very busy. In addition, they had new environment and culture to adjust to. With parents' encouragement and help, Tina had been writing journal daily nearly half a year. Undoubtedly, the researchers played a very important role in the development of Tina's writing. Her attitude in journal keeping changed from reluctance to willingness to habit.

In Nov. 2002, when Tina took IPT, she scored 11 out of 12, which put her into competent writer category. Writing is her highest score among three parts (The other two were oral and reading). During the writing development, parents acted as stimulators, readers and supervisors.

Results and Discussion

(1) English Listening and Speaking Development

Tina's English Listening and Speaking Development was put at the first priority when she just arrived at this country. The researchers believed that if she could not communicate with others, she might lose her confidence to develop any other skills, e.g. reading skills and writing skills. She might be reluctant to attend school. Tina's ESOL teacher and mainstream classroom teacher did a lot to get her familiar with English alphabet and 200 sight words within 3 months. Those training established a solid foundation for Tina's further skill development.

While staying at home, the researchers tried their best to make English, mainly from TV, cassette tapes, video tapes, meaningful to her; besides, as from their experience, the researchers told Tina to imitate the Standard American English from TV, video tapes and cassettes. The researchers refrained from teaching her any English pronunciation if possible. In Nov 2002, she took IPT and ranked at Level D for Speaking, which was a big jump from the first IPT test in May 2002 when she just arrived here for 4 months. However, the score was not good enough comparing to how much time the researchers had put in.

Though the researchers put the main focus on Tina's oral language development and most of the time was spent on that, among all three skills tested in IPT, oral was the lowest one. The results puzzled the researchers. According to Fradd and McGee (1994), for the young English language learners with little literacy in home language like Tina, basic oral language competence is likely to emerge earlier than the competence in reading and writing. But this was not the case for Tina. When Tina took the IPT in May 2002, she did not achieve oral as good as reading and writing. And then the second time in Nov. 2002, she still did not achieve oral as good as other two skills, either. The researchers observed carefully that Tina slept well, had a good breakfast and she was very energetic. When Tina returned home that day, the first author asked her how she felt about the test,

she said: "The reading and writing were very simple." But she did not mention about oral part. The first author supposed that was not easy but difficult as the researchers could see from her test results.

Since Tina took the IPA, she hardly had any ESOL class any more. It seemed that the ESOL teachers in her school had too many students to be taken care of. So after the second IPT test, Tina basically stayed away from ESOL program. According to Tina's academic report on Feb. 11, 2003, her score for "Oral and Written communication" in the mainstream classroom was ranked No. 1. (The details were in Appendix A.) Only after three months, Tina's "Oral and Written Communication" was ranked No.1 in the mainstream classroom. That made the researchers believe the test contents of IPT and mainstream classroom were very different.

In the English listening and speaking development, the parents acted as supporters and explainers.

(2) English Reading Development

Tina's reading development achieved most among three skills being tested. This was due to her reading of lots of picture books and chapter books from public library. At the start, she borrowed books with big pictures and few scripts, and then gradually, under the request of her teachers, she started reading chapter books during her "Dear Time" at school. That moved her rapidly from reading with picture help to a much higher level, i.e. understand the text from the context. According to Tina's academic report on January 30, 2003, Tina was No. 3 in class rank in her mainstream classroom. (See Appendix B).

Tina usually had 10 picture books and 3-5 chapter books at home. If the researchers were busy, the researchers would ask her to read her books and she could ask questions. Her questions usually consisted of two parts. The first part was always the meaning of a word or a sentence. After the meaning was cleared, she most probably would ask the culture related to the sentence and the researchers needed to explain that to her. Tina was a child with an inquiring mind. She would nott let it go if she had a question. She would ask her teacher or the researchers to answer it. Of course, she would not let it go, either, if she saw an error in her teacher's spelling or mathematical miscalculation. Tina's mainstream classroom teacher told the researchers that Tina corrected her misspellings and mathematical miscalculations for several times. The researchers once asked Tina why she did that. She said that the teacher encouraged them to pick up her mistakes and it was not right to keep silent when she knew they were wrong.

During the English reading development, the parents worked as helpers and friends at home.

(3) English Writing Development

In this article, writing development consists of spelling and journal keeping. Tina's invented spelling showed clearly she knew the pronunciation of those words, but she was trying to figure out the correspondence between spelling and sound, for example, she spelled "table" as "tabl", "parent" as "parnt", and sometimes a trace of her memory of those words was clearly shown to the researchers that she was not sure very much of the order of letters. For example, she spelled "so" as "os", she spelled "prince" into "pirnce", "money" into "monnye" Thus, in Tina's writing, there were two types of spelling errors. One was that she knew the pronunciation of the word, but created her own spelling and

the other one was that she knew the pronunciation of the word and remembered vaguely its spelling, but she was not very sure of the order in some letter combinations.

One point worth mentioning here is that Tina did very well in her spelling test. Every week she received a spelling list of 10-20 new words from her teacher. The researchers would then help her categorize them by their common sounds or common spelling as most people refer those as phonics techniques. Tina then used her learning strategies to memorize them on Friday morning before she took the spelling test. The scores were usually excellent. It might be because the strategies that the researchers used were working well for Tina's spelling tests.

Though Tina achieved very well in her spelling tests, she still had problems in spelling. The researchers could notice that from her journal every day. Tina's spelling problem was mainly in invented spelling. Maybe it was because she kept a journal every day, all invented spellings were recorded, so the researchers noticed this of her problem. If she did not keep a journal, the researchers might not be able to detect them since her spelling tests' scores were excellent, her class work was perfect.

From the test the researchers adopted from Read (1971), Tina clearly demonstrated her understanding of pronunciation of those invented spelling words. The only thing was that she did not remember the conventional spellings of those words. The researchers believe more reading and writing would definitely improve her spelling.

Spelling could be improved by frequent practice. Tina practiced her spelling through keeping her journal each day. At the initial stage, her journal entries were a little short and content was simple, but gradually her journal entries were becoming longer, especially when she had a good time at school or with her friends somewhere and a little bit more specific when she had a science lab or music demonstration.

Reading from Tina's journal, we could see clearly that Tina was gong through five stages of spelling: a) pre-communicative stage; b) semiphonetic stage; c) phonetic stage; d) transitional stage and e) correct stage (Fields & DeGayner, 2000). Tina is still lingering between c), d) and e) stages of spelling at the present time. During the whole process, the researchers never blamed or corrected her misspelling. They just gave her help or answered her questions whenever she had, and demonstrated to her why "girl" but not "gril" and why "little", but not "little".

Tina's journal not only served as a spelling board, a literacy development display, but also served as a channel for the researchers to understand what she was doing at school and how she felt in her daily life. The parents' roles in the development of writing were stimulators, readers and supervisors.

Conclusion

The limitation of the study was obvious. That was the researchers could not partial out many variables such as ESOL program, mainstream classroom, individual talent, L1 (Chinese and Thai language) learning experience, just name a few and assess to what extent can Tina's success be attribute to the parental involvement, That would leave for further studies. The present study suggested what the researchers had done might have an important impact on Tina's academic progress and for which some conclusions might be drawn.

For the past 14 months during Tina's literacy development, Tina made a big progress in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Here is a comparison of IPT results to see

Tina's progress:

	Oral	Reading	Writing
May, 2002	A	25/51	5/12
Nov. 2002	D	41/51	11/12

Note: date of starting ESOL: Jan.8, 2002.

During a period of 14 months, Tina, a native speaker of Chinese and Thai, during the age of 7.5 to 8.5 had built her English from zero to independent ESOL level. In addition, she won: (a) all five awards including Honor Roll from mainstream classroom for fall 2002; (b) all two awards including Best Student Award from Chinese school for fall semester, 2002; (c) No. 1 for Oral and Written Communication for the fourth quarter; and (d) No.3 for reading for the fourth quarter (She also ranked No. 1 for math and 97% percentile for national math test in third grade).

Parents could play an important role in their children's education, including English education. The role could be critical when it came to ELL students if you could imagine they had to study a second or third language (in Tina's case) in addition to their content learning.

Parents should be helpers and supporters of what teachers are doing in the classrooms, which could save both teachers' and parents' a lot of precious time. When Tina just arrived here, teacher lent her some books every week and asked parents to read to her. The researchers did that. The researchers also helped Tina in her final project for the first semester; otherwise, she would be really desperate if you could imagine how she could use her limited English for constructing a project on panda.

With the experiences of learning foreign languages in Asia and the theories the researchers learned in ESOL field, the researchers also foresaw what was going to happen for each step. For example, since the researchers knew that, in case of Tina, she would experience "silent period", they would not urge her to speak English when she was not ready to do so. That would only embarrass her, make her diffident and frustrated. Today when the researchers asked Tina to listen to her first conversation with her native speaker classmate, she would not believe she was so incapable of speaking English and she would not even imagine that was she. The researchers also reminded her what they always said at the initial stage when Tina kept on asking when she was going to speak English :"Six months."

At this point of the article, let the researchers put Tina's ESOL teacher's comments after Tina took ITP in Nov. 2002 here as the ending of the article. The article ends, but the study on Tina is going to be carried on:

> We are pleased to tell you that your child, Tina, has completed IPT State battery successfully. Based on your child's ability to use English and on the most recent test scores, she has placed out of ESOL program. She will remain on the status of independent level. As I explained to you, this means she will be monitored twice a month to see her growth. Here are her test results. On the oral test, she scored level D, which designates her as Fluent English Speaking. On the reading test, she scored 41 points out of 51 placing herself in the Competent Reader Category. This test is made up of five parts: vocabulary, vocabulary in context, reading for understanding, reading for life skills, and language usage. In the same order, these were the results: 9 out of 10 items, 8 out of 10 items, 8 out

of 12 items, 7 out of 9 items and 9 out of 10 items. These are her reading test scores. The writing test consists of 3 parts: conventions, writing two sequence stories, which were rated in a scale from 0-3 with 0 being the lowest. The last part was to write her own story, which was rated in a scale from 0-3 with 0 being the lowest. In the convention part, she scored 9 out of 10 items. In the first story of second part, she scored 2. In the second story, she scored 3. The total was 5 points. In the last part, she scored 3. All her scores fall in Competent English Writer Category.

According to *Grades 2, 4, 5 Chart to determine ESOL Levels based on the IPT Oral, Reading and Writing Assessments*, "Oral (D, E), Reading (36-51), Writing = 8-12 for all four parts (conventions and 3 writing samples): Independent". Tina exited the ESOL program!

With the active involvement of parents, Tina had made big achievement in her English listening, speaking, reading and writing. In every critical step, the parents acted at home as supporters, helpers, friends, stimulators, readers and supervisors. The parents' active involvement in their child's English education largely promoted the child's English achievement.

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Appendix A

Student Summary (all assignments) for 'Oral & Written Communication', 2/11/2003

Name **Wei, Tina** ID: 441576 Grade (97.3%) **Class Rank: 1**

	Score	Grade	Date
Test (45%, 500)		**96.4% A**	
Pompeii (20%, 100)	100	100% A	1/10/2003
Joe L (20%, 100)	88	88% A	11/15/2002
Titanic (20%, 100)	100	100% A	11/22/2002
Spelling Test Unit 10 (20%, 100)	94	94% A	12/10/2002
Patrick and the great molasses (20%, 100)	100	100% A	
Participation (15%, 800)		**92.5% A**	
Week of Nov 4 (12.5%, 100)	100	100% A	11/4/2002
Week of Nov15 (12.5%, 100)	100	100% A	11/15/2002
Week of Nov 22 (12.5%, 100)	90	90% A	11/22/2002
Week of Dec 1 (12.5%, 100)	90	90% A	12/6/2002
Week of Dec 8 (12.5%, 100)	95	95% A	12/13/2002
Week of Dec 12 (12.5%, 100)	90	90% A	
Week of Jan 5 (12.5%, 100)	85	85% B	
Week of Jan 12 (12.5%, 100)	90	90% A	
Classwork (40%, 900)		**100% A**	
Handwriting W (11.1%, 100)	100	100% A	12/19/2002
Handwriting U (11.1%, 100)	100	100% A	12/19/2002
Handwriting Review (11.1%, 100)	100	100% A	12/19/2002
Handwriting R (11.1%, 100)	100	100% A	12/19/2002
Literacy Book page 79 (11.1%, 100)	100	100% A	11/13/2002
Handwriting (11.1%, 100)	100	100% A	11/15/2202
Journal Entry: Health (11.1%, 100)	100	100% A	12/12/2002
Handwriting: I & j (11.1%, 100)	100	100% A	12/13/2002
Journal Entry (11.1%, 100)	100	100% A	1/3/2002

Appendix B

Student Summary (all assignments) for 'Reading', 1/30/2003

Name: **Wei, Tina** ID: 441576 Grade: A (95.6%) **Class Rank: 3**

	Score	Grade	Date
Test (40%, 300)		**97.3% A**	
"When Lo Louis Won" (33.3%, 100)	100	100%A	11/23/2002
The Titanic: Lost...and Fou (33.3%, 100)	96	96%A	1/9/2002
Pompeii (33.3%, 100)	96	96%A	1/23/2003
Quiz (15%, 400)		**92.5% A**	
Verbs in Present (25%, 100)	100	100% A	
Fact and Opinion (25%, 100)	100	100%A	12/19/2002
Verbs in the Past (25%, 100)	70	70%A	
Verb to be (25%, 100)	100	100%A	
Participation (15%, 900)		**93.3%A**	
Week of Nov 4 (11.1%, 100)	90	90% A	11/4/2002
Week of Nov15 (11.1%, 100)	90	90%A	11/15/2002
Week of Nov 18 (11.1%, 100)	90	90%A	11/18/2002
Week of Nov 22 (11.1%, 100)	100	100%A	11/22/2002
Week of Dec 1 (11.1%, 100)	90	90%A	12/1/2002
Week of Dec 8 (11.1%, 100)	100	100%A	12/13/2002
Week of Dec 12 (11.1%, 100)			
Week of Jan 5 (11.1%, 100)			
Week of Jan 12 (11.1%, 100)			
Classwork (15%, 700)		**92.1% A**	
Fact and Opinion (14.3%, 100)	100	100%A	1/2/2003
Vocabulary (14.3%, 100)	100	100%A	11/20/2002
Nouns and Verbs (14.3%, 100)	100	100%A	1/2/2003
Fact or opinion (14.3%, 100)	93	93%A	1/9/2003
Nouns (14.3%, 100)	96	96%A	1/9/2003
Main idea (14.3%, 100)	56	56%A	1/17/2003
Fact and Opinion (14.3%, 100)	100	100%A	1/3/2003
Homework (15%, 200)		**100%A**	
Vocabulary Pompeii (50%, 100)	100	100%A	1/14/2003
Writing Story (50%, 100)	100	100%A	1/15/2003

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